

How self driving cars will transform marketing

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Marketing In The Fast Lane With Self-Driving Cars

From George Orwell predicting the overwhelming reach of television in 1984 to the video phone calls in *Back to the Future*, it seems that technology often imitates pop culture. Nowhere could that be truer than with the new developments in self-driving vehicles.

These self-driving vehicles won't just change the way we look at transportation. They will shift people's behavior in a critical way, making it a new avenue for **digital marketing**. When you consider how much time the average person spends in their vehicle every day — about two hours according to most studies — this type of **marketing** could become a new cornerstone. This new avenue could be a great new way for **brands** to connect with their target audience, by creating personalized, value-added services.

How self driving will become the new driving

One of the champions of self-driving cars, [Elon Musk](#), likens them to elevators and the elevator operators of old:

"They used to have elevator operators, and then we developed some simple circuitry to have elevators just come to the floor that you're at, you just press the button. Nobody needs to operate the elevator. The car is just going to be like that."

As the technology improves, cars will actually be able to do the job more efficiently than humans. After all, [90 percent of motor vehicle accidents](#) are due to human error. Once it's evident that self-driving cars can eliminate the vast majority of accidents, they'll become the standard for roadway use. Indeed, having a car you could actually drive would be prohibitively expensive, or even illegal. The end of the need for drivers will impact just about every industry.

Mass public transportation will become mass individual transportation

Public transport options will become less popular as self-driving vehicles become available at a moment's notice. Governments will be able to funnel money away from expensive public transit programs and instead focus it on ways to take ridesharing to an individual level.

Airlines will feel the impact as well, as short commuter flights are abandoned for the privacy and convenience of a self-driving vehicle. After all, if the driver can sleep in their car, it's just as convenient to drive that 8-9 hour trip rather than fly it.

Cars will not be just a mode of transportation, but an extension of the individual inside.

Advertising that already exists in these public transportation venues is aimed at the masses. Flat-screen advertisements in subways have been around since [2005](#); in-flight movies and magazines have been around for much longer. These advertisements are not personalized for the individual, but instead focus on gaining as much attention from a large group of people in order to convert an extremely small percentage of them.

But when individuals are able to order up their own vehicle, these advertisements aimed at the masses will no longer be appropriate. Instead, the individual will come to expect individualized service and in that, individualized advertisements. By ensuring that in-vehicle **advertising** is focused, and **designed** to give the individual something they need, companies can connect and create **brand** recognition.

The interior will create the experience

Instead of staring at the road, occupants might browse the Internet, watch TV or decide on a restaurant along their route. People spend an [average of two hours a day in their cars](#), and that time that used to be occupied by driving will be wide open for other tasks. This is where personalization will be important. Cars will not be just a mode of transportation, but an extension of the individual inside.

Things like picking up groceries or take-out for dinner have the potential to be done by the car itself. The car might receive the address from their owner, or even get a check-in from a company letting it know that an order is ready. In a way, self-driving cars could become the new delivery man.

As vehicles become autonomous, drivers will become passengers.

The focus of driving itself will change. It will go from being a purpose-driven activity to an experience-driven activity. The time spent staring out the windshield at the concrete will be occupied elsewhere. Self-driving cars will be expected to know their occupants, making the impact of **marketing** in these places even stronger.

Marketing toward the future

Of course, when it comes to this **marketing** avenue, it's not about spamming a captive audience with ads for products or services. Instead, it's about enhancing their in-vehicle experience. If the traveler is on their way to an amusement park, the vehicle could send them information ahead of time about any special events or things to see. If they're on the way to a grocery store, they can receive more information about products and even learn about specials that might be going on. The vehicle can become a tool for enhancing the customer's trip and

helping them plan their day.

While this seems like a distant future, it's important to always be **marketing** toward the future. Things we already know about mobile **marketing** will work when implemented in a vehicle, as well. That's why it's important to focus on things that will work with technology on the move, like:

- **Targeting by location.** It's important to integrate the physical and the **digital** for customers on the move. After all, [90 percent of customers](#) still do their purchasing in brick-and-mortar locations.
- **Personalized by user preference.** The ads the passenger should be given will be targeted to their specific preferences. For example, a vegetarian won't get ads for steakhouses along their routes, single adults might get ads for new clubs or concerts and so on.
- **Happening in real time. Marketing** in-vehicle will kind of be the new billboard. Smart marketers put their billboards in just the right spaces. Not so far the person forgets about it before they get to the exit, not so short that they miss it entirely. In-vehicle ads will need to recreate this experience **digital**

With apps turning vehicles into moving wearables, more opportunity grows for marketers. On average, people spend about [two hours a day](#) in their vehicles. If these people didn't have to drive, what would they be doing? As vehicles become autonomous, drivers will become passengers. Marketers need to prepare for this by working on location-enabled, personalized messages that can happen in real time, on multiple devices.

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